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New religious orders for men

JOHN PATRICK DONNELLY, SJ

Introduction

Historians stress what is new in history, so the new religious orders of the Catholic Reformation attract more attention than reform movements in the older traditional orders of monks and friars. Since these older orders were much larger than most new orders, their efforts to reform probably contributed even more to reforming Catholicism. Some older orders, however, virtually disappeared. The crusading orders in Baltic lands, Spain and Portugal largely lost their reason for existence, and civic rulers took over most of their assets. Many bishops and cardinals felt that religious orders should be phased out altogether or amalgamated into four or so different types. Many bishops hated the exemptions from episcopal control and the privileges the papacy had conferred on the orders. Despite such attitudes, the period saw the creation of new male and female orders and congregations that reshaped Catholicism in the next 500 years.

The creation of new religious orders is usually a sign of Catholic vitality. The thirteenth century saw five new major orders of friars. The aftermath of the French Revolution and Napoleon saw dozens of new orders, especially of women. The fifteenth century was almost barren, while this chapter traces the rise of eighteen men's orders during the Catholic Reformation. None of these new orders were started by popes and few by bishops. Their founders were sometimes priests, sometimes laymen, who saw social and religious needs and gathered followers to answer those needs. Except possibly for the Spanish Discalced Carmelites, all the new orders stressed active ministry more than prayer, although none saw work and prayer as either/or alternatives. Many new orders added a fourth vow to the traditional ones of poverty, chastity and obedience, for instance to teach or care for orphans or the sick. Some took solemn vows, some took simple vows which were easier to dispense. Some congregations took no vows but did live in communities so that their lifestyle

was similar to that of religious orders. Some new orders wore distinctive habits, as had earlier religious orders, but others adopted the cassock of parish priests. Often the new orders required a longer and more rigorous training than did the medieval orders. Most had both priests and lay brothers. Some, notably the Jesuits, were highly centralized; in others each community enjoyed considerable autonomy. Seven of them made teaching their main or only ministry. Most of the new orders tended to work with the poor and needy. Most encouraged frequent confession and weekly communion for both their own members and pious lay people. Most were confined to a single country during their formative decades, but almost all gradually spread to other countries. Many spread to Asia, Africa or the Americas, but all were slow to recruit new members from outside Europe. All were short on funds, but that had some advantages, notably that they rarely had to worry about interference from *in commendam* superiors who were not members of the order but controlled their finances.

Members in most of the new male religious orders fall into two groups: lay brothers who did low-skill jobs, largely around the community (e.g., cooks, porters, secretaries), and the priests and men in training for the priesthood. That division largely reflected social and class divisions in the larger society. Lay brothers usually came from the peasantry or urban working classes and seldom knew Latin, which was a prerequisite for priestly training. Some lay brothers were widowers who entered later in life; thus Giovanni Tristano, a respected architect, entered the Jesuits at forty. Most candidates entered religious orders between fifteen and twenty-two. The Theatines were probably the most aristocratic orders. Many of their candidates were already priests, as were those of the Roman Oratory. Most candidates of the teaching orders, the Jesuits and the French Oratorians, came from their students. Most were sons of merchants, administrators, lawyers and doctors. Younger sons of the nobility often entered the religious life. Thus the good manners of the Jesuits and the fact that three of their first five Generals were noblemen made the Jesuits an acceptable career for the nobility, especially after Duke Francis Borgia became a Jesuit. But many noble and wealthy families feared losing their sons and threatened to withdraw them from Jesuit schools, so Loyola barred accepting students from a Jesuit school without their parents' permission. In Spain only the Jesuits would accept candidates of Jewish ancestry; many such men entered, but in 1593 the Jesuits too, under pressure from Philip II, barred their doors. The Capuchins, who often worked among the peasantry and urban poor, and the Piarists, who taught their children, attracted many gifted young men from the lower classes.

The new Italian religious orders

The rule of St Francis of Assisi (c. 1181–1226) set such a high standard of poverty that its application resulted in numerous schisms among later Franciscans. Leo X in 1517 tried to consolidate various Franciscan factions in two juridically separate orders, the Conventuals and the stricter Observants but renewed calls for even stricter observance continued and resulted in four additional schisms during the sixteenth century. The most important of these led gradually to the full independence of the Capuchins (OFM Cap) as an order in 1619.

Unlike most of the other orders studied here, they have no canonized founder – rather they have always looked back to St Francis himself for inspiration. The first Capuchin vicars-general were flawed leaders. In 1525 Matteo da Bascio (*d.* 1552) left the Observants looking for a more austere life; he grew a beard and wore a habit with a pointed hood (*cappuchino*, whence Capuchins), practices which he traced back to St Francis and which the Capuchins later embraced. Matteo did not want to start a new order and later returned to the Observants. Ludovico da Fossombrone (c. 1498–c. 1560), a former soldier, took his place, drew up constitutions in 1529 and secured from Clement VII a bull that authorized the new lifestyle and conferred considerable privileges. But Ludovico alienated so many friars that he was forced to resign and was later expelled. Meanwhile many zealous Observants joined the Capuchins, who began expanding from their original base in the Marches of east-central Italy. This alarmed the Observants, who secured a new bull ordering former Observants to return, but the new pope, Paul III, did not enforce the bull, partly because two influential noble women, Vittoria Colonna and Caterina Cibo, supported the Capuchins. The new vicar-general, Bernardino d’Asti (1484–1554), although not charismatic, governed well, revised the constitutions and secured solemn papal approbation in 1536. Troubles returned with the fifth vicar-general, Italy’s most charismatic preacher, Bernardino Ochino (1487–1564). His preaching took on a Protestant tone, and when he was asked to report to Rome and the Inquisition in 1542, he fled to Calvin’s Geneva. The whole Capuchin order fell under suspicion, and calls for its dissolution arose. The order was exonerated after an investigation but was restricted to Italy until 1574.

Most of the early Capuchins lived on the outskirts of small towns and begged their food. They did street preaching and encouraged frequent confession and communion, but they rarely heard confessions lest they seem to intrude on the work of parish priests. They won universal favour for their heroic, even reckless, devotion to helping those stricken by plague. Of all the new orders

the Capuchins grew the fastest, especially after 1574. Their membership grew to 8,803 by 1600 and 27,336 by 1700. They did not go into teaching and did not produce many scholars, but they did produce popular religious writers, and they cultivated a common touch which made them extremely effective preachers in missions to rural parishes. Their greatest preacher was St Lorenzo da Brindisi (1559–1619), who served as vicar-general (1602–5) and healed divisions within the order. He was also a learned theologian, gifted in seven languages; he doubled as a diplomat and military chaplain. Most of his later years were spent in central and eastern Europe, and his work carried him from Poland to Portugal, where he died.

During the sixteenth century the spiritual and material needs of the Italian people, ravaged by plague and war, inspired several leaders, most of them canonized saints, to found many small active religious orders or congregations. Meeting the Protestant challenge was seldom a major concern. Most of these orders are called Clerks Regular because they were clergy who followed the rule (*regula*) of a religious order. Because of their small size most of these orders attempted unions with other orders, but almost all these attempts proved abortive. Their history is traced here chronologically.

The first community of the Theatines or Clerks Regular (CRT, OT or OTheat) was started at Rome when four men took the traditional vows of poverty, chastity and obedience at St Peter's on 14 September 1524. Their leaders were Gaetano Thiene (1480–1547) and Giampietro Carafa (1479–1559, later Paul IV). Carafa came from a wealthy Neapolitan noble family and was an accomplished humanist and the Bishop of Chieti (Theate in Latin, whence the name Theatines). Carafa resigned his bishopric and served as the first superior. Later Paul III named him a cardinal and put him in charge of the newly founded Roman Inquisition, whose repressive measures he backed with all his heart. Later as Pope Paul IV (1555–9) he strove to uproot heresy and clerical abuse throughout Italy. He even suspected several leading cardinals of heresy. Gaetano (known as Saint Cajetan) was a more gentle soul. Before his vows he had travelled through northern Italy where he established confraternities to help poor people and victims of syphilis. He also encouraged people to frequent confession and communion, a cause that his followers embraced.

The first Theatines obtained papal authorization in 1524. Later Theatines took the three traditional vows after a year of novitiate; some were already priests, some were still in training, and some were lay brothers. Two things distinguished them from earlier religious orders: first, they recited the traditional priestly office in common, but without singing it; second, their vow of poverty forbade them to hold benefices or to beg. Rather they tried to live

from alms which people offered spontaneously, and so they were chronically short of funds. Their main priestly work was aimed at the poor and the sick. Carafa drew up a letter of regulations which largely governed the order; after gradual modifications to his regulations official Constitutions were drawn up and published in 1604.

The Theatines fled to Venice from Rome in 1527 when Spanish soldiers sacked the city. Six years later they established a second community in Naples. They returned to Rome in 1557, and by 1570 they had also opened houses in Milan, Cremona and Piacenza. During the seventeenth century they had fifty communities in the Italian cities and had spread to Spain, Portugal, France, Germany, and Poland. During the last seven decades of that century they did some missionary work in Russia and India. By 1700 there were 1,400 Theatines, but then their number slowly declined. Many reforming bishops came from their ranks.

The mother church of the Clerks Regular of Saint Paul (CRSP) in Milan was dedicated to St Barnabas, so they quickly became known as the Barnabites. Saint Antonio Zaccaria (1502–39) with eight disciples started living as a community in 1530. Although trained in law and medicine, Zaccaria became involved in charitable work in his native Cremona; after ordination to the priesthood in 1528 he shifted his work to Milan. Initially the Barnabites took no vows, but in 1533 they successfully requested papal permission to take the three traditional vows and live as a religious community. Their rule, first drafted in 1542, received its final form in 1579. Their spiritual mentor was the Dominican friar Carione de Crema, but he became suspected of heresy, and the public self-flagellations practised by Zaccaria and his disciples alienated many people. They were expelled from Venetian territory in 1551. Although Paul III vindicated them after an examination in 1535, suspicion and hostility slowed their growth.

Not until 1557 were they able to set up a new community in Pavia. By 1567 they had eighty-one members scattered in six small communities in the Po Valley and one in Rome, but St Charles Borromeo, the Cardinal-Archbishop of Milan, supported them strongly and put them in charge of a minor seminary. Thereafter their numbers began to climb – 322 men by 1608 and 726 by 1700. Communities were established in France (1610) and Austria (1626). In Italy they concentrated on preaching, stressing moral reform, and on encouraging frequent confession and communion and devotion to the eucharist. They held mental prayer sessions in common both mornings and evenings and made daily use of the discipline. In France they also staffed some schools. Because of their small numbers the Barnabites sought mergers with the Jesuits, the Somascans,

the Oratorians and the French Fathers of Christian Doctrine, but nothing came of these proposals. In 1623 they did absorb a still smaller congregation, the Fathers of Our Lady of the Assumption.

The Clerks Regular of Somascha (CRS, also known as the Somascans or the Order of Saint Jerome Aemilian) traced their roots to a group of clerks and laymen at Venice who began living as a community in 1528. Their leader was St Girolamo Emiliani (1481–1537), who remained a layman and died at Somascha, a town near Bergamo, whence the name of the order. He was a former soldier whose religious conversion led him to devote his life to helping the many orphans created by war and plague. He brought together a small group of clergy and laymen to care for the orphans. Although orphans remained the main focus of the nascent order, the Somascans gradually began working in parishes, training seminarians, and teaching catechism. A female branch was soon formed. Paul III approved the Somascans in 1540. In 1568 Pius V gave a fuller approval to the Somascans and to their work in seminaries, colleges and parishes as well as with orphans, and they began taking solemn vows. The Somascans, urged by Giampietro Carafa, entered into a union with the Theatines, but that only lasted from 1547 to 1555. Discussions about uniting with the Capuchins or the Jesuits came to nothing. The seminary at Venice and colleges at Como and Rome were among their more important communities. By 1600 the Somascans had 438 members, but their numbers barely increased during the seventeenth century. In 1616 the Somascans entered a union with the Congregation of Christian Doctrine of France (*Doctrinaires*), but the two groups separated in 1647.

No saint of the Catholic Reformation was so attractive as Filippino Neri (1515–95), the founder of the Oratorians (*Filipini* or Congregation of the Oratory, CO). Born and raised in Florence, in 1533 he tried a business career at Naples for a few months and hated it. He went to Rome where he spent eighteen years as an urban hermit wandering the streets, now smiling and mirthful, now deep in prayer. He was ordained there in 1551. He gathered young men, encouraged them to frequent confession and communion, and discussed the gospels with them. As his audience grew, he secured a room, called the Oratory, at the church of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, where they could meet for discussion and prayer. In 1567 he and a group of priests and laymen began living together as a community, but without taking vows or having an official superior. The members contributed to the community expenses from their income or patrimonies. Community living, which is more central to the religious life than vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, largely implies those vows. Neri saw his followers as models for diocesan priests. They heard confessions, preached

and sponsored participation in religious music, from which sprang the musical genre of the oratorio. Gregory XIII recognized them as a congregation of priests in 1575. Neri himself wrote no rule, but later rules based on his practices were redacted several times. The Oratorian constitutions, which Paul V approved in 1612, owed much to Francesco Maria Tarugi.

After 1575 the Oratorians began setting up communities in various Italian cities, most notably at Naples in 1586. There conditions were far different than at Rome. Most of the Roman Oratorians were well-educated and mature priests when they entered. At Naples they were young laymen, often from lower-class backgrounds. They needed a novitiate for spiritual formation as well as training in theology. For Neri the superior was to serve as a role model, a first among equals rather than a person in command. At Naples the superior gave orders. Although the Naples Oratorians did not take religious vows, they were closer to the practice of religious orders, and most of the sixty-one Oratorian communities set up in Italy between 1591 and 1700 followed the Naples model. By the end of the seventeenth century there were some 150 Oratorian communities around the world, strongest in Italy, Spain and Portugal, but also in Latin America, Poland, Belgium, and even India. Each community was autonomous. The French Oratorians, who were even closer to traditional religious orders, will be discussed later.

In 1573 St Giovanni Leonardi (1541–1609) founded at Lucca the Clerks Regular of the Mother of God (also known as the Matritani or Leonardini, CRMD). In 1603 the order's first general congregation elected Leonardi superior general for life and approved the rules he had gathered and organized over the previous thirty years. The papacy approved the congregation in 1595 and raised it to the status of an order in 1621. The Matritani worked in parishes but lived as communities. They dedicated all their churches to Mary and celebrated her many feast days with great pomp. By the time of Leonardi's death they had communities in only two cities, Lucca and Rome (established in 1601), and their work remained restricted to Italy for the next two centuries. Protestants were stronger in Lucca than any other Italian city, so the Matritani tried to oppose Protestantism by preaching on the decrees of the Council of Trent and teaching catechism. A short-lived union with the Piarists between 1614 and 1617 fell apart because the Matritani stressed parish work and the Piarists were dedicated to teaching.

In 1578 St Carlo Borromeo founded at Milan a small local order named the Oblates of Saint Ambrose after Milan's early bishop. Nine years previously Borromeo had tried to persuade St Philip Neri to send Oratorians to work in his archdiocese, but Neri sent only four men and then abruptly withdrew them

when the imperious Borromeo insisted on controlling them. After consulting Neri about Oratorian practices Borromeo introduced some key differences in the rules he drew up for his Oblates. They were to recite the daily office in community and were directly under obedience to the bishop. Gregory XIII approved their rule. The Oblates spread to France and England in the nineteenth century.

The only new order begun in southern Italy was the Clerks Regular Minor (*Chierici regolari minori*, Caracciolini, CRM) founded at Naples by St Francesco Caracciolo together with Giovanni Agostino Adorno. Sixtus V approved them in 1588. Their communities included both priests and brothers under superiors elected for three-year terms. They tried to stress humility, ministry to prisoners, especially those condemned to death, and the perpetual adoration of the eucharist, at which members of a community took turns. Their second community was set up at Rome in 1595, and in the early seventeenth century they spread to Madrid, Valladolid, Alcalá, and Salamanca. In addition to the three usual vows, the Caracciolini added a fourth, not to seek church dignities.

St Camillus de Lellis (1550–1614) was another former soldier. After gambling away his possessions in 1575 he worked for the Capuchins and then joined them briefly as a lay brother, but he was dismissed because he had a war wound that refused to heal. Next he served in a hospital at Rome. There St Philip Neri was his confessor and encouraged him to devote his life to the sick. He studied for the priesthood at the Jesuit Roman College. In 1584 he gathered some followers and started a small congregation of priests and brothers without vows. In 1591 the pope raised them to the status of an order; they took the usual three vows plus a vow to serve the sick, including plague victims. They were known officially as the Order of Clerks Regular, Servants of the Sick, but more popularly as the Camillians (OSCam). In 1594 their communities started living right within the hospitals where they worked. Their main community was established at Naples in 1588, and the order grew fairly rapidly. When Camillus died there were 330 professed members in fifteen Italian cities. Gradually they began to minister to sick people in their own homes. They were not on the cutting edge of medical science, but they did insist on cleanliness, no minor matter in the hospitals of the time. Camillians wore a habit with a distinctive red cross, later taken over by the modern Red Cross.

The Piarists or Scolopi (Poor Clerks Regular of the Pious Schools) were founded at Rome in 1597 by a Spaniard, St José de Calasanz (1557–1648, known in Italy as Calasanzio). José studied both law and theology and was ordained in Spain before he came to Rome seeking a post in the papal curia; there he worked

with confraternities which helped the poor and taught catechism. Although the Jesuit colleges scattered through Italy did not charge tuition, they did demand that prospective students could read and write. Seldom could working-class parents pay for elementary schooling, so their children usually could not attend Jesuit schools. Here was an obvious need, and Calasanz together with some companions started a school at Rome that taught poor students the four Rs – religion, reading, writing and arithmetic – plus enough Latin for students to get into the Jesuit colleges. They financed the school by begging and donations from wealthy churchmen. By 1610 they had 700 students, more than most Italian Jesuit colleges. The twenty members of the teaching staff included priests and pious laymen living together as a community. In 1617 Paul V authorized them to set up as a separate religious order whose members took a fourth vow to teach. During the next seventeen years they started thirteen schools in Italian cities. In 1631 they opened a school in Moravia. Fifteen years later there were thirty-seven communities with 500 Piarists.

Their classes usually met for five hours a day, with a break for lunch, and continued all year round except during the hottest part of summer. The growing demand for teachers, however, induced Calasanz to lower admission standards and require less training among his men. Most of the Piarists were lay brothers and taught elementary courses in Italian; the priests taught advanced students in Latin. This created divisions and tensions in the communities. The Jesuits, Barnabites and Somascans, who were also involved in teaching, often resented the Piarists. Noble patrons were their main source of financing, but some noblemen felt that educating the working class would lead to unrest. When critics questioned the orthodoxy of the order a commission of cardinals investigated it in 1642 and relieved the aging and autocratic Calasanz of office. Worse was to follow. The Piarists were forbidden to accept novices, and those with vows were permitted to seek entry into other orders. Two hundred left, three hundred stayed. But the Piarists also had supporters, and these prevailed. The papacy recognized them as a religious congregation in 1656 and as a religious order with solemn vows in 1669. Again they could take in novices, and their numbers reached 950 by 1676. Catholics who opposed the Jesuits invited the Piarists to Habsburg lands in Germany in the 1630s. During the eighteenth century they spread to Spain and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The Jesuits

The Society of Jesus (the Jesuits, SJ) was the most important religious order founded during the sixteenth century; it quickly outnumbered the other new

orders except the Capuchins. At the death of their founder Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) there were a thousand Jesuits, by 1600 there were some 8,500, and by 1700 they counted 20,000. Their impact was greater than that of the Capuchins, who largely worked among the peasantry. The Jesuits tended to work in cities and among the middle and upper classes. Their range of ministries was more diversified than that of other orders.

Loyola was a Basque courtier and not a soldier, but he did serve several weeks as a gentleman volunteer. In 1521 he was wounded fighting for Charles V against the French at Pamplona and underwent a religious conversion while convalescing at his family's castle. After a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and learning Latin at Barcelona, he briefly attended the universities of Alcalá and Salamanca before transferring to the University of Paris (1528–38) where he gathered six companions. In 1534 the seven took a vow to work for souls in Jerusalem. They and three new recruits from Paris gathered at Venice in 1537, but war between Venice and the Turks prevented their sailing. These first ten companions included five Spaniards, two Frenchmen, two Savoyards and a Portuguese. Of the Spaniards, all but Francis Xavier remained in Italy most of their remaining years. The other orders discussed previously were confined to Italy during their opening decades; the Jesuits were international from the start and quickly spread through Catholic Europe and beyond. Since they could not go to Jerusalem, they put themselves at the service of Paul III, who gave them permission to be ordained and sent them to preach in the cities of north Italy. Rather than work as so many freelance priests, the companions decided to form a religious order, the Society of Jesus, which Paul III approved in 1540. They elected Loyola their superior general (later called simply the general) and commissioned him to draft constitutions.

The constitutions, which were approved by the first Jesuit General Congregation in 1558, contained many innovations. The general was to serve for life and appoint all other important superiors so that authority was far more centralized and less democratic than in other orders. How to live the vow of poverty has always caused tensions in religious orders and repeatedly split the Franciscans. Loyola's stress on centralized authority and obedience rather than on poverty helped keep the Jesuits united. Yet Loyola frequently urged flexibility in applying the rules. Jesuits were divided into four groups: lay brothers who engaged mainly in physical work within the communities, scholastics in training for the priesthood, coadjutor priests, and the professed fathers. Only the professed fathers, men noted for zeal and learning, were allowed to take solemn vows. In other religious orders, all members took solemn vows. Jesuits with only simple vows could be easily dismissed if they wanted to leave or if

they failed to live up to high standards. Voting rights were restricted to the professed fathers, only 3 per cent of all Jesuits at Loyola's death. That percentage grew sharply during the coming decades as more Jesuits completed their studies. Professed fathers took a fourth vow, to go on missions when the pope sent them. This was not a vow of unrestricted obedience to the pope, but it did encourage Jesuit loyalty to the papacy.

Jesuits kept their family names. They did not wear a distinctive habit. They read the divine office privately to save time for their ministries and did not sing or recite it in common, as did other religious orders. They had no obligatory physical penances. They had no parallel order of nuns. Their novitiate and later training were considerably longer than in most religious orders. Their Constitutions were far longer and more detailed than the previous rules for monks and friars. These innovations and the seeming arrogance of the Jesuits in calling themselves the Society of Jesus often fostered resentment among other religious.

Several new orders restricted their ministry: to serving the sick, helping orphans, or teaching. The Jesuits embraced an unprecedented range of ministries. Jesuit churches were usually attached to their colleges and were rarely official parishes, but the Jesuits did engage in preaching, encouraging frequent confession and communion, teaching catechism, and giving the *Spiritual Exercises*.

Jesuits esteemed missionary work beginning with St Francis Xavier, and by Loyola's death they were working in Brazil, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Japan. Later the Jesuits spread their work to Spanish America, opening pioneer colleges in Lima (1568) and Mexico City (1573). To evangelize native Americans and protect them from Spanish and Portuguese raiders, they established reductions, semi-independent colonies where Indians attended schools, learned catechism, reading, and new agricultural techniques, and developed music which blended native and western traditions. Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), a gifted linguist, entered China in 1583; in 1601 he set up a Jesuit house at Beijing, where he won favour with the emperor. The Jesuits continued to enjoy imperial favour for nearly two centuries, and this provided a shield for Christian missionaries working elsewhere in China. The court Jesuits proved key middlemen in teaching the Chinese about the West and vice versa. Ricci and his Jesuit successors adopted the clothing of court mandarins and argued that most of Chinese culture, for instance ancestor worship, needed only slight modification to become compatible with Christian faith and practice. Other missionaries objected, and a papal declaration of 1710 agreed with their objections.

The Jesuits encouraged all their missionaries to send reports to Rome; these were often published to foster financial support and attract young men to the order, but they also spread knowledge of other cultures to the West. Their records remain important historical sources today.

The Jesuits also worked in 'the other Indies', rural Europe, where the peasants had only a rudimentary grasp of the Christian faith. Thus in 1590 the Jesuit General Claudio Aquaviva ordered every Jesuit Province to assign six to twelve Jesuits to evangelizing rural areas. They were sent out in pairs to villages where they preached, taught catechism and heard confessions. In this work the Jesuits were second only to the Capuchins. Jesuits also worked in city hospitals and prisons. Although again second to the Capuchins, Jesuits often served as military chaplains. It was dangerous work: thus ten Jesuit chaplains died at the siege of Ostend in 1600. Jesuits often served as royal confessors or court-preachers at Paris, Vienna, Lisbon, and Munich, but not at Madrid. Royal confessors had considerable influence in moral and religious questions. The Jesuits tried to avoid serving as inquisitors, not because they objected to the Inquisition, but because their participation would increase tensions with the Dominicans, who supplied most inquisitors.

The first communities that Loyola envisioned for the Jesuits were called Professed Houses where the professed fathers would live; attached would be a church where the Jesuits would preach, give the *Spiritual Exercises* and administer the sacraments. Professed Houses, largely because they were forbidden to have fixed income and depended on alms, enjoyed little success.

Loyola and his first companions did not originally plan to become educators, but Jesuit schools gradually became the main Jesuit ministry. Jesuit colleges could have fixed incomes and were initially residences for Jesuits in training who took courses at nearby universities, for instance at Coimbra and Padua. The real pioneer Jesuit college for lay students, not young Jesuits, was opened at Messina in 1548. Encouraged by the Spanish viceroy, the city government provided funding. Loyola sent a team of gifted Jesuits to get the college off to a good start. Soon other Sicilian towns were asking for colleges, then requests from Italian and Spanish cities came flooding in. Loyola usually declined requests that did not provide funding for at least fourteen Jesuits. Claudio Aquaviva, General of the Society from 1581 to 1615 when Jesuit influence peaked, claimed he refused 150 requests for colleges between 1581 and 1590. By 1615 the Jesuits had 372 colleges, at first mainly in Italy, Portugal and Spain, then gradually spreading to France, Germany and Poland. The colleges became the main recruiting ground for young Jesuits, but many had to be

turned away because funds to train and feed them were short during the first century. The Jesuit colleges remained the largest and most coherent educational system in the world till the Bourbon monarchs pressured the papacy into suppressing the Jesuits in 1773. The new Jesuit colleges, which charged no tuition, threatened the jobs of lay teachers everywhere. Universities also felt threatened by the Jesuit colleges, which gradually expanded their curriculum upward so that it overlapped with university courses. At Paris, Louvain, Padua, Lima and elsewhere opposition from the universities forced the Jesuit colleges to scale back or close.

Loyola was much struck by the superiority of the organized, step-by-step curriculum at the University of Paris compared to the more haphazard and ineffective training he got at Alcalá and Salamanca; his Jesuit Constitutions laid down rules for Jesuit education which drew on his Paris experience. The new Jesuit colleges, most of which trained students from roughly ten to eighteen years old, largely followed the new humanistic studies. Usually students needed some skill at Latin before admission. The curriculum stressed Latin authors and skill at writing and speaking Latin; Greek literature was less emphasized. Catechism was usually taught only once a week, but Catholic students were expected to attend mass daily and go to confession monthly. These last requirements did not apply to Protestant students, who were not uncommon in eastern Europe and Germany, where the Jesuits had colleges at Cologne, Munich and Vienna even before Loyola's death. Students took part in frequent classroom disputations, and Jesuit schools drummed up support by inviting parents and town elites to public orations by both students and faculty. Later Jesuit colleges were famous for elaborate dramas which stressed religious themes. As the number of colleges grew, so did the need to systematize their curricula. Initially distinguished Jesuit scholars drew up model curricula which the generals encouraged colleges to follow. In 1586, 1591 and 1599 committees drew up a plan of studies (*Ratio Studiorum*). The 1599 *Ratio Studiorum* remained in effect till the Jesuits were suppressed in 1773 and was revised when the Jesuits were restored in 1814. In 1599 the Ratio was on the cutting edge of training for the upper classes, but it became increasingly outmoded as the decades passed. It did allow for some flexible application, with special rules for different countries. During the eighteenth century the Jesuits introduced more mathematics, science and history into their colleges.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the *via moderna* based on the writings of Scotus and Ockham dominated the study of philosophy and

theology. Several factors led to a revival of the *via antiqua*, especially of Thomism, in the sixteenth century. Lutheranism pushed out Nominalism at many German universities where it had been strong. Several eminent Dominicans led a revival of Thomism, especially Cardinal Cajetan (Tommaso de Vio, 1469–1536) in Italy and Francisco de Vitoria (c. 1483–1546) in Spain. The *Summa theologiae* of Aquinas quickly replaced the *Sententiae* of Peter Lombard as the standard text in theology. The Capuchins chose St Bonaventure as their official theologian. The Discalced Carmelites and the Jesuits chose Aquinas. Loyola's choice of Aquinas was critical, given the spread of Jesuit schools. Although only the small advanced classes in those colleges taught philosophy and theology, many leading philosophers and theologians in Catholic Europe came from those schools.

The most influential early Jesuit theologians were St Peter Canisius (1521–97) and St Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621); both wrote polemical works against Protestants, catechisms republished in hundreds of editions, and popular devotional books. Francisco Suarez (1544–1606) was a major theologian but even more important for his philosophical and legal treatises.

Spiritual writings have always been more popular than theological works. Ironically Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* (Latin edition at Rome in 1548) is the most influential and popular book ever written by a Jesuit; it has gone through some 5,000 editions in virtually all modern languages. Ironically, because Loyola was a precise but not a gifted writer; the book was not meant to be read, and Loyola ordered that it should not be given to anybody who had not already made the *Spiritual Exercises*. Those who have not made the *Exercises* will find it a maze of rules and meditations – it is somewhat like reading a cookbook: one must first bake the cake and eat it, and only then judge the recipe. The *Spiritual Exercises* is a manual to help directors guide people through thirty days of meditation and prayer (the *Exercises*) designed to reform their lives. In this the *Exercises* have proved amazingly successful, although those willing to dedicate thirty days were already well on the way to reform. Almost from the start, Jesuits have used shorter versions of the *Exercises*, three days to a week, for people who had less time available. Jesuit novices usually made the full *Spiritual Exercises* shortly after joining the order; later Jesuits made an annual eight-day retreat based on the *Exercises* so that the *Exercises* became the foundation of their spiritual lives. Among the many other Jesuit spiritual writers were Alfonso Rodriguez (1538–1616) and Luis de la Puente (1554–1624). The multi-volume works of them both were translated into many languages and were printed in more than 300 editions.

Most religious orders had ties to lay confraternities. Thus Loyola set up three Roman confraternities for the wealthy to help ex-prostitutes, young women in danger of becoming prostitutes, and impoverished noblemen. At Seville the Jesuits set up a confraternity to teach black slaves catechism. The most important Jesuit-sponsored confraternities were the Marian sodalities. These were usually linked to Jesuit colleges where the students elected their lay prefect but the Jesuit superior appointed the Father Director. All these sodalities worldwide were linked to that at the Collegio Romano, and the Jesuit General theoretically had the final voice on membership. Different groups – nobles, lawyers, people working in various trades and crafts – had their own sodalities for greater solidarity. Thus the Jesuit college at Naples in 1595 had seven different sodalities, one with 600 members. It was not unusual for half the students at a Jesuit college to belong to the college sodalities, and the alumni continued to belong. The sodalities were a major force in spreading Jesuit spirituality.

New orders in Spain

Spain played the commanding military role in the Counter-Reformation but supplied only two new male religious orders, the Brothers Hospitallers and Discalced Carmelites. Neither fit the Counter-Reformation image of soldiers of God.

José Cuidad (1495–1550, known as St John of God), who founded the Hospitallers, was a Portuguese ex-soldier who ran a religious bookstore in Granada and took poor people into his home. In 1537 he and some friends formed a community. Its members worked in hospitals and were not ordained, but they did take the three traditional vows of poverty, chastity and obedience plus a fourth vow to help sick people. Constitutions were drawn up after his death, and the order received papal approval in 1572. The new order, which soon spread to the Spanish colonies in the Americas, had 626 members by 1600 and 2,046 by 1700.

Most of the new religious orders were started by men for men; later they added a branch for women. The reverse was true for the male Discalced Carmelites. Teresa Sánchez de Ahumada y Cepeda (1515–82, known as St Teresa of Avila) was the sixteenth century's greatest mystic and arguably its greatest woman writer. She entered the Carmelite convent at Avila in 1536 and over the next twenty years her deepening religious experiences convinced her that the Carmelite order badly needed reform in both its female and male branches. By 1567 St Teresa had succeeded in establishing two reformed convents for

Carmelite nuns. She felt her nuns needed Carmelite confessors who shared their ideals, so she discussed a parallel reform among male Carmelites with Giovanni-Battista Rossi, general of the Carmelites, who was then visiting and trying to reform the male Carmelites in Spain. He supported her project, and a tiny convent of male Discalced Carmelites opened at Avila in 1568. It had only three members, among them St John of the Cross (1542–91), the great poet and premier theologian of mysticism. The name Discalced Carmelites comes from the sandals its members wore instead of the shoes worn by the unreformed Calced Carmelites. Sandals became a symbol, but the new branch of Carmelites insisted on many other austere features of the original rule approved by Innocent IV in 1247. They faced the same opposition from the Calced friars that the Capuchins had faced from the Observant Franciscans, partly because the new branch was drawing off many excellent friars, partly because its austerity seemed a reproach to the older branch. The tensions increased when Jerome Gracián was appointed visitor to reform the order in Spain and proceeded to establish more Discalced convents. The Calced fought back and even kidnapped and imprisoned John of the Cross at Toledo for eight months till he escaped. Philip II granted the Discalced the right to establish a separate province in 1581. They held their first general chapter in 1588; Clement VIII recognized them as an independent order five years later. Gradually they spread, but differences arose so that there were soon two almost independent orders, one in Italy and later in France, Germany, Belgium and Poland where the friars emphasized pastoral ministries, the other in Spain, Portugal and their colonies where the friars stressed prayers and the mystical tradition enshrined in the writings of St Teresa and St John of the Cross. The Discalced friars grew from 1,000 in 1600 to 5,000 by 1700, but the Calced Carmelites remained far more numerous in early modern Europe.

France

Eight religious wars between Catholics and Huguenots ravaged France from 1562 to 1598 and slowed efforts to reform French Catholicism. A remarkable religious revival during the next fifty years gave rise to several new religious orders in France, most of which drew inspiration from Philip Neri and the Oratorians. The spiritual writer (and later cardinal) Pierre de Bérulle (1575–1629) founded the first French Oratorian community at Paris in 1611; by 1651 there were 431 French Oratorians. The French communities were less independent and more homogeneous than those in Italy. They had a superior general elected for life and held triennial General Chapters, but like the Italian Oratorians they

were technically societies of common life, not religious orders, since they did not take the three traditional vows. Unlike the Italians, their main work was teaching and not pastoral ministries. They had twenty-two colleges by 1700 and were training priests in nineteen of the seminaries mandated by Trent, which the French bishops were slowly establishing. The French Oratorians gradually became rivals of the Jesuits, partly because many of them were inclined to Gallicanism or Jansenism, partly because their rival colleges offered a more modern curriculum and featured a galaxy of fine scholars.

In 1592 César de Bus (1544–1607) and Jean Baptiste Romillon (1543–1622) founded the *Doctrinaires* (*Pères de la doctrine chrétienne*) at Avignon to teach poor people. Five years later they received papal approval. But their communities split when de Bus urged that they take a vow of obedience, something Romillon opposed. As a result Romillon and eleven communities which supported him joined the French Oratorians in 1619. De Bus's supporters joined the Somascans until 1647, when they broke away. They began taking simple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in 1659 and devoted themselves mainly to teaching.

The most successful of the new French congregations was the Vincentians (Congregation of the Mission, Lazarists, VSC). In 1626 their founder, St Vincent de Paul (c. 1581–1660), established their first community in Paris at the priory of St Lazarus. They received papal approval in 1632 and counted 500 members and twenty-three communities by 1660. After 1636 they slowly spread to Italy, Ireland, and Poland. A general assembly in 1668 mandated that they take simple vows, but they continued wearing the traditional soutane of French priests. Their superior general was elected for life. Their main work, as their title suggests, was giving revivalist missions in the countryside, but they also staffed fifteen seminaries, directed retreats and continued their founder's ministry to galley slaves of the French Mediterranean fleet.

St Jean Eudes (1601–80) was an Oratorian working in Normandy and Brittany, but he founded the new Congregation of Jesus and Mary (CJM, Eudists) in 1643 at Caen after his superiors opposed his plan to establish a seminary at Caen. Members did not take public vows. By 1670 the Eudists were teaching at six seminaries in Normandy and Brittany and preaching parish missions throughout France. Similar to the Eudists were the Sulpicians (Society of Priests of St Sulpice) which the spiritual writer Jean Jacques Olier (1608–57) founded at Paris in 1642. They were diocesan priests but lived in community; by 1657 they were operating five seminaries in France. Their constitutions were approved in 1664.

Despite the loss of many countries to Protestantism the Catholic Church was in better shape in 1650 than in 1500. For the first time it could claim to be a worldwide church. Most of its clergy were better educated and more zealous. The laity knew their faith and practised it better than during the Middle Ages. In this the reform of old religious orders and the work of new ones played a crucial role.